

SONICTM X-TREME



**Check
out
Sonic's
new
look!**



Michael Teitelbaum

Troll



Bunnie Rabbot is in danger!

The Swatbots have captured Bunnie. And the only way Sonic can save her is to beat the evil Dr. Robotnik in an X-Treme sports contest. Sonic knows he's better than Robotnik at bungee jumping, rock climbing, and surfing. But Robotnik has some dirty tricks up his sleeve.

Can Sonic free Bunnie — or will Robotnik crush the Freedom Fighters forever?



By Michael Teitelbaum

Interior Illustrations by Ron Zalme

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CHAPTER 1

Sonic The Hedgehog sat on his mountain bike, atop the tallest mountain on the planet Mobius. His good friend Rotor stood far below at the base of the mountain. Rotor held a stopwatch in one hand and a checkered flag in the other.

Lately Sonic had become hooked on X-Treme sports. He had ridden down this twisting, bumpy mountain trail many times. On each ride, Sonic picked up a little more speed. He now thought of just one thing—riding down the slalom course before him and breaking his own personal speed record at slalom mountain biking. I'm ready to push this bike to the max! he thought. Edge City, here I come! He focused his full attention on the flag in Rotor's hand.

With a snap of his wrist, Rotor brought down the checkered flag. At the same instant, he hit the start button on his stopwatch.

Sonic saw the flag drop. He gave a hard push with his left foot. Then he leaned all his weight onto his right foot, shoving down the pedal. The mountain bike shot off the starting mark. Sonic was on his way, barreling down the mighty mountain.

The narrow slalom course wound to the left, then back to the right, snaking its way down. A tall column of rock rose from the ground at each curve. Sonic had to swing around each column as he rode the course. First he leaned left. His left shoulder was only inches from the ground as he swung past the column. Next he leaned right. His right knee scraped the craggy ground. Sonic kept his balance and continued his breakneck pace.

Rotor looked up and spotted Sonic making his way down the mountain. He glanced at the stopwatch. Five seconds ahead of his best pace, thought Rotor. But he's almost at Dead Man's Curve!

Dead Man's Curve was the sharpest, most dangerous section of the whole slalom course. Sonic remained relaxed but kept a tight grip on the handlebars. "Stay with it now," he said to himself. "Lean into it. Remain calm and juice right through it."

Sonic hit Dead Man's Curve. He leaned to his left and swung through the curve with his left elbow only inches from the ground. When he came around the far side of the curve, the course straightened out.



"In your face!" shouted Sonic. He raised both fists into the air triumphantly as he sped down the straightaway and neared the bottom of the course. Rotor let out a sigh of relief. "Don't get cocky!" he shouted up to Sonic. "Keep your hands on the handlebars!"

The worst was over. Sonic pedaled hard down the final stretch. He crossed the finish line, and Rotor clicked off his stopwatch. "Way past cool!" Sonic shouted. He turned his bike around and coasted over to Rotor. "Well," began Sonic, "how did I do?"

Rotor looked at his stopwatch and smiled. "Congratulations, pal," he said. "You broke your old record by four seconds!"

"Juicin'!" exclaimed Sonic. "I am the Master Blaster of X-Treme sports. Just call me Sonic X-Treme!"

Sonic's celebration was suddenly cut short. Princess Sally, leader of the Mobius Freedom Fighters, came into view. She was a short distance away, running toward Sonic and Rotor.

"Sonic!" she called weakly.

"That's `Sonic X-Treme' from now on, Sal!" the hedgehog yelled back. Sonic was so caught up in his record-breaking triumph, he didn't notice that something was wrong with Sally.

"Sonic," began Rotor.

"Sonic X-Treme," corrected Sonic.

"No, Sonic, I'm serious," said Rotor. "Sally's in trouble."

Sonic focused on the figure now stumbling toward him. He could see that something was very wrong. "Sal!" he shouted. Sonic leaped off his bike and dashed over to Sally in a blazing blue blur. When he reached Sally, he saw that she looked exhausted. Her clothes were torn, she was covered in dirt, and she could barely stand up. Sally had obviously been in a battle.

Sonic and Sally, along with Rotor, lived in an underground hideout called Knothole Village, located deep in the Great Forest of Mobius. They were all part of a brave band of Freedom Fighters, led by Princess Sally. Sally's father, the Good King of Mobius, had once ruled the planet. But then Mobius fell into the evil clutches of Dr. Robotnik. Robotnik kidnapped the Good King and took control of the planet.

Mobius had once been a happy, clean place to live. But under Robotnik's rule, the planet became a dark, polluted wasteland. Robotnik's mechanical soldiers, called Swatbots, patrolled the planet. Their mission was to stop Sonic, Sally, and the Freedom Fighters in their quest to rid Mobius of Robotnik and place the rightful king back on his throne.

Sonic now picked up Sally and carried her to the base of the mountain. Rotor was waiting, very concerned. "What happened, Sally?" he

asked.

Sally caught her breath, then began. "Bunnie and I were out on patrol," she began. Bunnie Rabbot was a Freedom Fighter, too. She was half-rabbit, half-robot. Her body, legs, and left arm were mechanical and extremely strong. Her head and right arm were those of a living rabbit. Bunnie had once been a normal rabbit. But Robotnik had tried to turn her into a mindless robotic slave. Sonic saved her, but not before most of her body had been mechanized.

"We were carrying your new robot-paralyzing weapon, Rotor," Sally continued. Rotor was a great inventor. He was always building devices to help the Freedom Fighters in their battle against Robotnik. Rotor had invented this weapon to stop Robotnik's Swatbots. "A team of Swatbots ambushed us. Before we could use the weapon, one of them grabbed it and fired it at Bunnie. She instantly lost her robotic strength. Without it, she could barely move her heavy mechanical legs and arm. I just managed to escape myself."

"But where's Bunnie?" asked Sonic.

"The Swatbots captured her," replied Sally. "We've got to rescue her, Sonic. We've got to." Then Princess Sally collapsed in Sonic's arms.

CHAPTER 2

Sally awoke in the in the Freedom Fighters' hideout in Knothole Village, deep in the Great Forest of Mobius. Sonic had used his Super Sonic Speed to rush her back home. Rotor followed, riding Sonic's bike.

After arriving safely at Knothole, Sally was immediately attended to by Antoine. Antoine had been Sally's personal guard back in the days when the princess lived in the palace. That was during the years that her father, the Good King, had ruled Mobius. Antoine was now a Freedom Fighter, but remained Sally's loyal servant and protector. He had cleaned her up and was pressing a cool cloth to her forehead when she opened her eyes.

"So good of you to join us, Your Highness," said Antoine, smiling.

"Oh, I'm home," said Sally weakly. She raised herself up onto her elbows. "Bunnie!" she exclaimed. "We've got to go get Bunnie."

"And we will," said Antoine, easing her back down into a more restful position, "after you regain your strength." Antoine was extremely protective of the princess.

"But how did I get back here?" Sally asked.

"Courtesy of Sonic X-Treme Transportation System," replied Sonic, bowing slightly.

"Thanks, Sonic," said Sally, giving him a warm smile. She knew that Sonic was impulsive. He didn't always think through every decision before rushing into danger. His love of speed and action sometimes frustrated Sally. She liked planning each mission down to the last detail. But she also knew that Sonic's talent and energy had given a huge boost to the cause of her Freedom Fighters. Sonic's being on their team greatly improved their chances of retaking Mobius and rescuing her father.

"Yes, thank you," added Antoine. Antoine didn't care much for Sonic's style, but he did appreciate the hedgehog's loyalty to Sally.

"No prob, Antoine, old buddy," replied Sonic. "You know I'd do anything for our fearless leader."

Again Sally tried to rise from her bed, and again Antoine eased her back down. "We've got to start planning a mission to rescue Bunnie!" exclaimed Sally. "I don't think we can wait any—"

Sally was interrupted by Rotor. He burst into the room, very upset.

"I think you should all see this," said Rotor. "I picked up this broadcast in the outer chamber. I'll switch it on in here." Rotor turned on a large monitor in Sally's room. The image of Dr. Robotnik filled the screen.



Everyone in the room gasped. Robotnik's evil grin beamed from his face.

"I analyzed the broadcast signal," explained Rotor. "This message is being transmitted on all frequencies throughout Mobius."

"Butt-nik!" snarled Sonic. "What does he want?"

"I think, Sonic," replied Rotor, "that he wants you!"

"Quiet, everyone," said Sally. She lifted herself up onto her elbows again. "Let's listen."

The group of Freedom Fighters listened intently as Robotnik spoke. His deep voice filled the room. "This is a personal message for my old and dear friend, Sonic The Hedgehog," Robotnik began.

Sonic's eyes narrowed as he stared at Robotnik's image. "You're no friend of mine, creep!" Sonic shouted at the screen.

"I understand that Sonic has become quite good at X-Treme sports," Robotnik continued. "I've heard that he's broken all the existing records on Mobius. Very impressive—for a hedgehog. Well, Sonic, old pal, I am here to issue you a challenge. I challenge you to a one-on-one competition of X-Treme games. You see, you may be good, hedgehog, but I am better. If it happens on Mobius, then I am the best at it—whatever it may be. I'll prove that to you if you are brave enough to accept my challenge."

"I'd kick his Ro-Butt-nik all over the place," snapped Sonic. "But why should I even bother breaking a sweat against the likes of him? It would be no contest! There's no way I'd agree to play against him."

"I'm sure, Sonic, that you will agree to this contest," said Robotnik. "But if for some reason you don't, I've got something special to pique your interest. Your friend and fellow traitor Bunnie Rabbot is now my prisoner. If you do not agree to this competition, you will never see her again. I am, however, a fair fellow. If you beat me in this contest, Sonic, I will release Bunnie Rabbot. I'm sure you'll consider my terms fair."

"Oh, by the way," Robotnik went on, "I'm not holding your friend at my fortress, as you might expect. She is safely tucked away in a secret location. Don't think you can avoid this contest by attempting one of your feeble rescues. You cannot free her, because you don't know where she is!"

A sneer crossed Robotnik's face. "I give you 24 hours to decide. I will be waiting for you at the Northern Cliffs, the site of our first little contest. My trusted assistant Snively will accompany me. He will act as referee and scorekeeper. To prove that I have only the highest sportsmanship ideals in mind, I will allow you to bring a scorekeeper of your own. However, know

this: If you are not at the Northern Cliffs by 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, you will never see Bunnie Rabbot again! Have a nice day."

The screen went blank. The Freedom Fighters looked at each other in stunned silence.

"I don't trust him, Sonic," said Sally finally.

"And with good reason, Your Highness," added Antoine. "He's an evil liar."

"And those are his good points," said Sonic. "Still, what choice do we have? If I don't show up tomorrow morning, Bunnie's history!"

"But you have no way of knowing whether he'll keep his word," Rotor pointed out. "Even if Sonic wins, Robotnik still might not release Bunnie."

"I know," said Sally, sighing. "But, as Sonic said, what choice do we have? Right, Sonic? Sonic?"

Sally looked around in time to see a blue blur streaking away from her room.

"I'm going to get in a little practice before I beat Ro-BUTT-nik and get Bunnie back tomorrow morning," shouted Sonic as he sped from Sally's side.

"I guess that means 'yes'," said Sally. Then she leaned back and thought about the contest to come.

CHAPTER 3

Sally didn't get much sleep that night. She was exhausted from her battle with the SWATbots, but she was more nervous about the competition. She did not doubt that Sonic would win. But she wondered whether Robotnik would really release Bunnie. She lay awake, tossing and turning, wondering where in Mobius he could be keeping her.

Sonic, on the other hand, slept like a baby. He was confident that he could beat Robotnik in any X-Treme sport he might name. Sonic knew that Robotnik's huge ego, not his athletic talent, had led the evil dictator to challenge him to this contest.

The Freedom Fighters were all up early the next morning. The group gathered in their strategy room.

"How are you feeling, Your Highness?" Antoine asked Sally.

"Still a bit tired," Sally replied. "But that's not important now." Sally stood before the others, taking her place as leader of this band of rebels. "I've got a plan," she began. "Now listen up, everybody. Antoine, I want you to go with Sonic to act as the second referee and scorekeeper. I trust that Snively character about as much as I trust Robotnik."

"But, Princess, I—" Antoine started to protest, but Sally cut him off.

"No, Antoine," said Sally. "I need you to keep an eye on this contest. You need to make sure everything is fair and square."

Antoine looked at Sonic and smiled weakly. "Very well, Your Highness," he said, through clenched teeth.

"Way past cool, Antoine, old buddy," said Sonic. He gave Antoine a playful punch in the arm. "Just you and me, pal!"

"Way past cool," repeated Antoine, stiffly, rolling his eyes to the heavens.

"While you two are dealing with Robotnik," continued Sally, "Rotor and I are going on a mission."

"What kind of mission?" asked Antoine. Sally's safety always concerned him.

"I was just going to ask the same thing," said Rotor.

"We're going to rescue Bunnie," explained Sally. "Even if Sonic wins the competition—"

"Not if, Sal, when!" interrupted Sonic.

"All right, Sonic," she said. "Even when Sonic wins the competition, I just don't believe Robotnik is going to let Bunnie go. I want to free her before the contest ends."

"But where will we look?" asked Rotor. "Robotnik said that Bunnie's not at his fortress."

"I don't believe him for a second," replied Sally. "I think he said that just to throw us off. Anyway, we'll start our search there and see what we find."

"I'm with you, Princess," said Rotor. "As always."

Sally smiled at Rotor. She could not have put together a group of more loyal friends. Then she turned to Sonic. "How are you feeling?" she asked.

"I'm ready for juicin'," said the speedy blue hedgehog. "That Butt-nik won't even know what hit him! Northern Cliffs, here I come!"

"Good luck," said Sally.

"You too, Sal," replied Sonic. Then he zoomed away from Knothole Village at top speed. He was halfway to the Northern Cliffs when he realized that he had left Antoine behind. "Oops," Sonic said to himself. Then he turned around and sped back to Knothole Village.

"Forget something, pal?" asked Antoine sarcastically when Sonic returned.

Sonic just shrugged. He and Antoine headed out at a pace that Antoine could keep up with.

A few minutes before 10 o'clock, Sonic and Antoine arrived at the top of the Northern Cliffs. Large, craggy mountains extended in all directions.

Looking over the edge of the cliffs, Sonic could see a sheer drop down to the sea. The cliff seemed to disappear into the water below.

"Come on, Butt-nik," muttered Sonic. He tapped his foot impatiently. "This was your idea. Don't keep me waiting!"

"Why, I wouldn't think of it," said a voice from behind Sonic and Antoine. Sonic spun around and saw Robotnik glaring at him with an evil grin. Robotnik towered over Sonic. He was quite large and shaped like a beach ball. Stubby arms and legs stuck out from the top and bottom of his round body.

"So good of you to make it, hedgehog," said Robotnik, "though I left you little choice. Are you prepared to be humbled? I will take my rightful place as X-Treme sports champion of Mobius."

"In your dreams, Butt-nik!" replied Sonic. "Let's get these games going. It's time to juice!"

Next to Robotnik stood his assistant Snively. Snively was about half the size of Robotnik. He had a long nose. His few remaining strands of hair stuck out from his head in all directions.

"I will act as referee," began Snively, "representing the powerful and benevolent ruler of Mobius, the all-seeing, all-knowing, the great and brilliant—"

"I think we've heard enough," interrupted Antoine.

"Allow him to finish," ordered Robotnik. He could never get enough praise.

"As I was saying," continued Snively, "the great and brilliant and ever-so-good-looking Dr. Robotnik!"

"Thank you, thank you," said Robotnik, bowing as if a crowd had gathered to watch the competition.

"It's my turn, I suppose," said Antoine. "Very well. I will act as referee, representing the extremely fast, extremely impulsive, often reckless, and way-past-cool Sonic The Hedgehog."

"Thanks a lot, buddy," said Sonic sarcastically.

Robotnik and Sonic started to stretch and warm up. Snively and Antoine discussed the rules of the competition. They decided that the two

foes would compete in five X-Treme events: bungee jumping, rock climbing, slam-dunking, one-on-one soccer, and surfing.

"I will flip a coin to determine who goes first," said Snively, pulling a coin from his pocket. Snively flipped the coin high into the air, then yelled "Heads!" He caught the coin in his right hand. Then he slapped it onto the top of his left hand. "Heads it is," he proclaimed, removing his hand from the coin. The smiling face of Dr. Robotnik gleamed up from the surface of the coin. What Sonic and Antoine didn't know was that this particular coin had Robotnik's head on both sides!

Bungee jumping was first. The two referees attached a long bungee cord to a rock formation that jutted out from the top of the cliff. They tied the other end of the cord around Robotnik's feet. Each contestant would leap from the cliff. The bungee cord would stop him several feet above the ocean that raged at the bottom of the cliff. The competitor who bounced up and down the greatest number of times would win the event.

Robotnik stood at the edge of the rock formation.

"Ready?" asked Snively.

"Ready," replied Robotnik. Then he leaped from the cliff.



Robotnik's huge body fell like a stone. The bungee cord reached its full length. Robotnik kept falling. The bungee cord stretched, and Robotnik plunged into the water. The cord snapped back. Robotnik soared up toward the cliff.

"One!" shouted a soaking-wet Robotnik.

Again he fell toward the water, and again he splashed into the sea. "Two," he muttered, with much less enthusiasm.

Robotnik bounced one more time but was barely able to say "Three." Following his third bounce, he dangled from the bungee cord like an exhausted fish on a line. Snively pulled him back up—no easy feat—and dragged him onto the safety of the cliff.

"Are you all right, sir?" asked a concerned Snively.

Robotnik opened his mouth to reply, and a fish flopped out. It wriggled along the ground at the edge of the cliff, then hurled itself back into the sea.

"I'm fine," gasped Robotnik. He was exhausted after just one event.

Sonic looked on and smiled. I've got this little contest locked up—no prob! he thought.

"I counted three bounces for Robotnik," said Antoine. He jotted the number down on a sheet of paper.

Sonic tied the rope around his ankles and prepared for his jump. "You're going to need a bigger piece of paper than that to record my jumps, Antoine," joked Sonic.

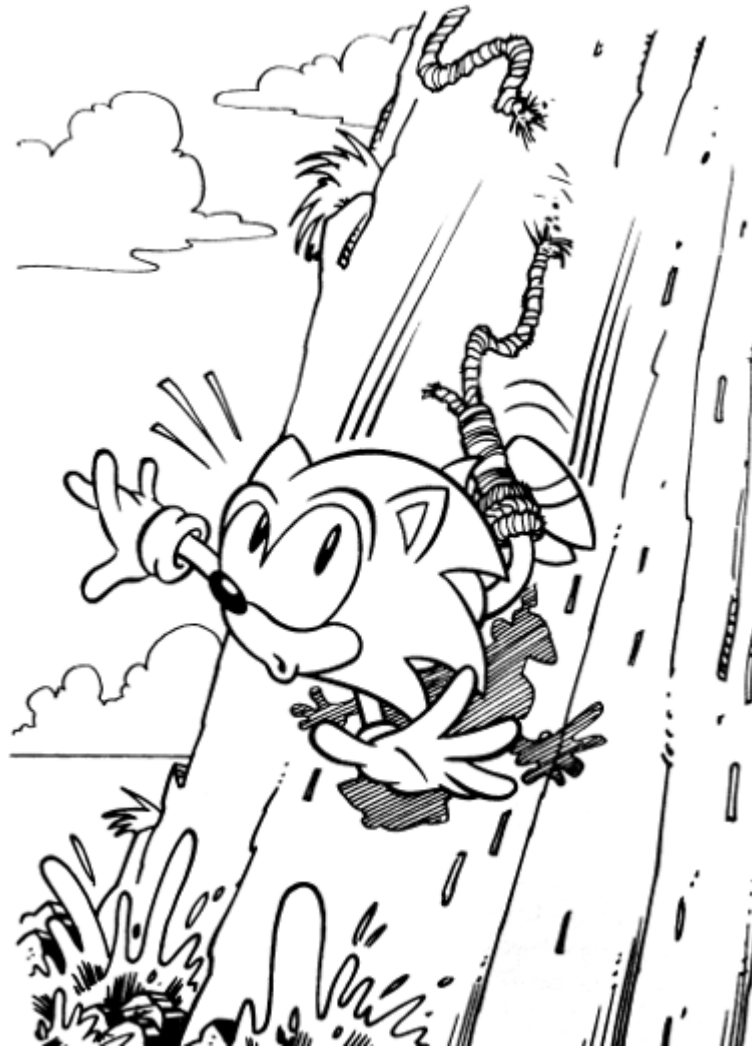
"Ready?" asked Antoine.

"Way past ready!" replied Sonic. Then he leaped from the cliff.

Suddenly, Snively pointed and shouted, "Look! It's the princess!"

Antoine spun around instantly. "The princess? Where?" he asked, looking out at the horizon.

At the precise moment that Antoine glanced away, Robotnik pulled out a knife and cut Sonic's bungee cord. Sonic plunged toward the ocean. The sliced bungee cord trailed away above him.



CHAPTER 4

"I don't see anyone," said Antoine.

"Oops," said Snively. "My mistake. I could have sworn I saw the princess. Must have been a mirage."

Antoine turned back and saw that Sonic's bungee cord had been cut.

"You tricked me, Snively!" shouted Antoine. "You distracted me so that Robotnik could cheat by cutting the cord when I wasn't looking!"

"Why, I'm deeply hurt at such an accusation," said Robotnik. "You didn't see me cut the cord, did you?"

"No, but—" began Antoine. Then he remembered Sonic.

The hedgehog revved into a Super Sonic Spin. His legs were a blur. Straining with all his speed, Sonic ran up the falling bungee cord. When he reached the top of the cut piece, he had just enough time to grab the length of cord that dangled from the top of the cliff. Sonic held one piece of the bungee cord in each hand. Then he tied the cut ends into a knot.

Sonic let go of the repaired bungee cord and bounced up and down again and again. "Two, three, four," he counted each time he returned to the cliff tops. "Eight, nine, ten," he continued. "You'll pay for this, Butt-nik!" he shouted. Then he added a few more jumps for good luck.

After his twelfth jump, Sonic bounced above the cliff, shifted his position in midair, and landed perfectly on his feet.

"I count twelve for Sonic The Hedgehog," said Antoine. He smiled with pleasure. "In spite of Robotnik's cheating, the first event goes to Sonic."

"Try something like that again, Butt-nik, and you'll end up eating the cord for lunch!" snarled Sonic angrily.

"I suggest we move on to the next event," said Snively innocently.

"Excellent idea, Snively," said Robotnik. "Now I know why I keep you around."

"Are you all right?" Antoine asked Sonic. "That was quite an impressive display of speed."

"Never better, Antoine, old buddy," replied Sonic. "Sonic's the name and speed's my game. Besides, beating a cheater gets my engine revved just a little bit higher. Come on. Let's go see what they have in store for me next."

CHAPTER 5

In the meantime, Sally and Rotor were trying to discover where Robotnik was keeping Bunnie Rabbot.

"We have to start at Robotnik's fortress," said Sally as they left the safety of Knothole Village. "If Bunnie really isn't there, maybe we'll find some clue as to where they took her."

Over the years of their struggle against Robotnik, the Freedom Fighters had mounted many missions to his fortress. No one knew the fortress or the various routes leading to it better than Princess Sally. She had spent her childhood there. In the days before Robotnik had taken over Mobius, the fortress had been her father's castle. After capturing the Good King, Robotnik had turned the castle into the dark stronghold it was today.

Sally led the way to the edge of the Great Forest. From there, she and Rotor followed a secret trail known only to the Freedom Fighters. The path led them through the Badlands of Mobius, a gray, desolate area.

The Badlands soon gave way to woodlands. Following a stream, Rotor and Sally emerged at the far end of the woods. Before them stood Robotnik's fortress. Sally led Rotor to a side entrance that she had used in the past.

"Only one Swatbot guard," said Sally, looking at the door. "Robotnik usually posts two Swatbots at each entrance."

"Maybe he cut down on the number of guards since he's not in the fortress," said Rotor.

"It would be just like that coward to guard himself more heavily than anyone else," said Sally. "Are you ready to put our plan into effect?"

"You bet," replied Rotor. Then he slipped into the woods. Rotor pulled out a small, portable frequency generator. *This should get the guard's attention*, he thought. Rotor returned to Sally's side. He activated the frequency generator with a remote control. The generator responded with a high beeping sound.

"Intruder!–Intruder!–Neutralize!" said the Swatbot. The robot guard rushed off into the woods to search for the source of the beeping, leaving the entrance to the fortress unguarded.

"Here's our chance," said Sally. "Let's go." Sally and Rotor silently made their way to the door. Not surprisingly, it was locked.

"Allow me," said Rotor. He pulled a small, handheld device from his bag. Two wires ran from the square box that made up the body of the device. Rotor secured the wires to either side of the lock, then switched on the power.

Lights flashed on the box for a few seconds. Then the sound of tumblers slipping inside the complex lock mechanism could be heard. In a few seconds, the door popped open.

"Nice trick," said Sally.

"No trick, really, Princess," explained Rotor. "Just my electrostatic digital tumbler sequencer. It's a small computer that sends out an electromagnetic field that tries every possible combination of lock settings. Sooner or later, one has to be right. It's never failed me yet!"

"Let's get inside," said Sally. She looked over her shoulder toward the woods. "Your frequency generator won't keep that Swatbot busy all day. Come on."

The two Freedom Fighters slipped into the fortress. Sally led Rotor through the familiar hallways and rooms. They searched everywhere for Bunnie but found no sign of her anywhere.

"For once in his life, Robotnik was telling the truth," Sally said dejectedly. "Bunnie isn't in the fortress. But where could he have taken her?"

"Look what I found!" exclaimed Rotor. Sally hurried over to join him.

"It's Robotnik's weapons-storage bin," explained Rotor. He and Sally stepped into a large room with a low ceiling. Shelves lined the walls. Each shelf held a weapon of some type. Sally and Rotor had defended themselves against most of them during their run-ins with Robotnik's Swatbots.

Suddenly, a voice rang out from behind them. "Freeze! Do-not-move-or-we-will-fire! You-will-come-with-us!"

Sally and Rotor looked at each other in terror. They were trapped. Behind them was the back wall of the weapons bin. In front of them stood 20 armed Swatbots!

CHAPTER 6

"You-will-come-with us!" repeated a Swatbot.

Rotor looked up and spotted his robot-paralyzing weapon. The weapon had been taken from Sally and Bunnie when Bunnie was captured. It now sat on a high shelf right above the head of the lead Swatbot.

"Princess," whispered Rotor.

Sally turned toward him.

Rotor tilted his head in the direction of the robot-paralyzing weapon. Sally nodded in recognition. After years of working together battling Swatbots, the two Freedom Fighters thought as one.

Sally and Rotor strode slowly toward the Swatbots. When Sally reached the first one, she grabbed the barrel of its laser rifle and thrust it up toward the ceiling. The Swatbot fired, blasting a hole in the ceiling directly above. A chunk of stone came crashing down, crushing the mutant robot.

That was all the distraction Rotor needed. As soon as Sally grabbed the rifle, Rotor leaped up and snatched his robot-paralyzing weapon from the shelf. He set the weapon to cover a wide field, then fired it. Pulsating rays spread out in all directions. They covered the Swatbots.

One by one, the robot soldiers stiffened, then fell. In a few moments, they were all down.

"Nice work, Princess," said Rotor.

"You too," said Sally. "I can see why they kept your weapon on a high shelf!"

Sally and Rotor stepped over paralyzed Swatbots as they left the weapons-storage bin.

"Where to now, Princess?" asked Rotor.

"Robotnik's control room," replied Sally. "I want to plug Nicole into the fortress's main computer. Maybe she can find out where Bunnie's been taken."

Sally and Rotor made their way to the main control room of the fortress. They were able to easily take out the Swatbots guarding the room using Rotor's weapon.

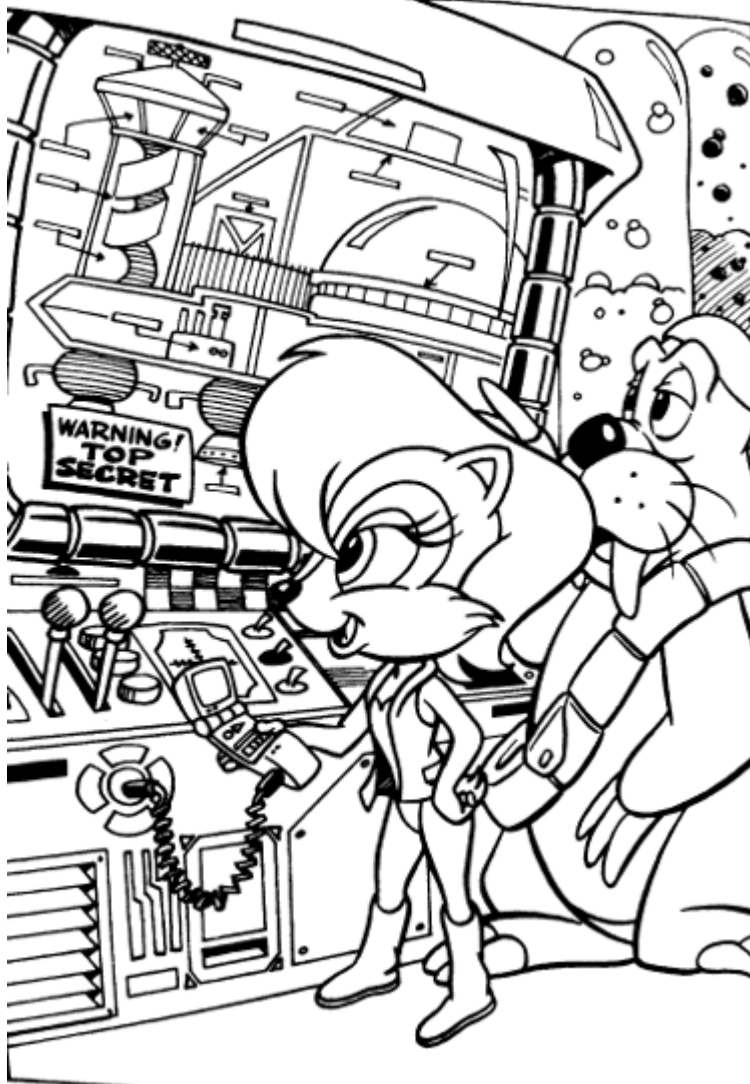
Once inside the control room, Sally pulled Nicole from her backpack. Nicole was Sally's portable computer. Nicole's programming included a voice and a personality.

"Hello, Princess," said the computer in a gentle, soothing voice. "What can I do to help you?"

"We're inside Robotnik's fortress," explained Sally. "I'd like you search around the main computer and look for any references to Bunnie. Robotnik captured her, but we don't know where he's holding her."

"Certainly, Princess," replied Nicole.

Sally plugged Nicole into an open port on the control room's main panel. From there, Nicole had access to all the files in the fortress's computer.



Nicole flashed, buzzed, and beeped while searching at digital speed. A few minutes later, the search was complete. "I'm sorry, Princess," Nicole said. "But I found no references to Bunnie at all."

Sally and Rotor both sighed dejectedly.

Nicole continued, "I did, however, find something quite interesting. Robotnik appears to have built an orbiting prison. I'll bring the plans up on the large viewscreen." A blueprint of a spaceship prison appeared on the huge screen before them. "According to the information in these files, the ship was completed very recently."

"A spaceship prison orbiting Mobius!" exclaimed Sally. "That must be where Robotnik hid Bunnie. No wonder we can't find her. She's not even on the planet!"

"Thank you, Nicole," said Sally, pulling the computer's connectors from the control panel.

"Of course, Princess," replied Nicole just before Sally switched off the power. "Always glad to help!"

Sally raced from the control room, heading out of the fortress in a big hurry. Rotor ran behind her, trying to keep up. "Where are we going, Princess?" he panted.

"Up to Robotnik's orbiter to rescue Bunnie!" replied Sally.

"But how are we going to get there?" wondered Rotor.

"In a spacecraft, of course," stated Sally.

"Where are we going to get a spacecraft, Your Highness?" asked Rotor.

"You're going to build us one," said Sally.

"I am?" asked Rotor. He was stunned, though flattered by Sally's faith in him.

"Of course," said Sally. "Now let's hurry. We've got to get you back to your workshop so you can begin at once."

Rotor was speechless. All the way back to Knothole Village, he wondered how he was going to pull this one off. Opening locks and paralyzing Swatbots was one thing. But a spaceship? He sighed as he struggled to keep up with Sally.

CHAPTER 7

Back at the X-Treme sports competition, Sonic and Robotnik prepared for their second event.

"The rock climbing race is next," announced Snively.

Robotnik and Sonic slowly made their way down the side of a steep cliff. Unlike the bungee-jumping cliff, this formation led down to a rock outcropping rather than the ocean. Antoine and Snively remained at the top of the cliff.

Snively held out a checkered flag. "When I lower this flag, the race will begin. You will climb up the face of the cliff. The first contestant to reach the top will be the winner." Snively turned to Antoine. "Understood?"

"I think I am capable of grasping the concept of a race," replied Antoine. "I wonder if you are capable of grasping the concept of winning without cheating. Understood?"

"Hmph," grumbled Snively. "Are you both ready?" he shouted down the cliff.

"Ready!" Robotnik called back in a light and innocent voice.

"Waiting on you, Snive-creep!" quipped Sonic.

Snively waited a few more seconds. Robotnik grabbed the rocky surface of the cliff. Sonic stood next to him with his arms folded, tapping his foot impatiently.

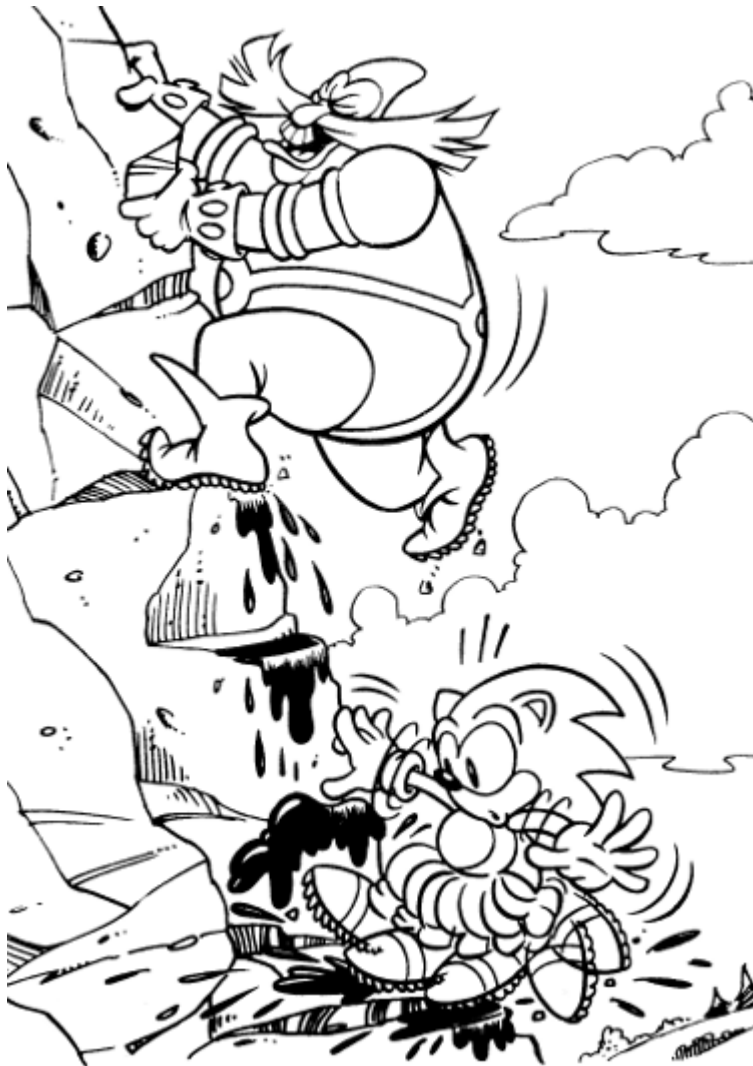
Snively lowered the flag. Robotnik pulled himself up the cliff face. As he did, he opened a small valve on his belt. The valve led to a plastic tube running down his pant leg. Oil squirted from the end of the tube—right in front of Sonic.

Sonic started up the cliff and began slipping and sliding back down.

"Hey!" Sonic exclaimed. "What in Mobius is going on?"

Robotnik slowly but steadily made his way up the cliff. Oil poured from the tube in his pant leg, coating the cliff's rocky surface below him. The tube was so well-concealed that Sonic couldn't figure out where the oil was coming from.

This has got to be Robotnik cheating, he thought. But I can't see how he's doing it!



"Sonic seems to be having some kind of difficulty," Snively commented, trying to sound surprised.

Antoine looked down and saw Sonic slipping and sliding as he tried to get started up the cliff face. "I'll bet it has nothing to do with Robotnik," said Antoine sarcastically.

"Why, whatever could you mean?" asked Snively. Then he his face split into an evil grin.

Robotnik continued climbing steadily up the cliff. Sonic remained on the bottom. Each time he tried to climb, he slipped on the oil and slid back down.

Robotnik was almost at the top of the cliff when Sonic got an idea. He burst into a Super Sonic Spin. His feet were spinning so fast that the heat from the friction burned off the oil as he ran. Thick black smoke from the burning oil trailed behind him. As the oil burned off, Sonic finally got the traction he needed to climb up the cliff face. He picked up speed as he went, closing in on Robotnik.

Sonic neared the top of the cliff just in time to see Robotnik haul himself over the edge. Sonic reached the top just seconds after him, despite the oil. Still, Robotnik had gotten there first and was declared the winner.

"The second event goes to Robotnik the Swift," said Snively. "The events are tied—one to one."

Sonic fumed. *What chance do I have of winning, he thought, if Buttnik keeps finding ways of cheating?*

CHAPTER 8

Back in Knothole Village, Rotor was working nonstop in his workshop. He had constructed a spacecraft that looked more like an undersea diving bell. It was a round metal chamber, with circular windows all around. There was room inside for two passengers and their gear.

Princess Sally entered the workshop and saw the spaceship. "We need to go up into space, Rotor," she said, "not under the sea."

"I started with an old diving bell, Princess," explained Rotor. "I had it lying around in the back of the workshop. It gave me a solidly constructed, airtight vehicle to begin with. Otherwise, I would have had to build the ship's body. Since we're in a hurry, I thought this would save us time. Now all I have to do is get this thing to fly!"

"I'll let you get some work done," said Sally. She left the workshop and returned to her quarters. Using Nicole, Sally studied the blueprints of the orbiting prison. She was trying to come up with a way of escaping after they landed on the orbiter and found Bunnie. *All I keep coming up with is about a million Swatbots against the two of us!* Sally thought. *And even if we manage to free Bunnie, she doesn't have her robotic strength to help us all escape. Still, we've got to try!* She turned her thoughts back to the blueprints.

In his workshop, Rotor was testing the guidance system he had put together to steer the ship. He was also putting the finishing touches on a special weapons port. At the flick of a switch, a small door slid open. It revealed an opening just large enough for his robot-paralyzing weapon. "There isn't time to develop a new weapons system for this craft, so this will have to do," he muttered to himself.

The night wore on. Sally continued to study the blueprints. Eventually, she fell asleep at her desk. Rotor, on the other hand, had managed to stay up all night. As dawn broke over the Great Forest, he was conducting final tests on his spacecraft.

Sally awoke with a start when Rotor knocked on her door. "Princess," he called softly. "I think we're ready."

"That's great, Rotor," said Sally, rubbing the sleep from her eyes. She picked up Nicole and placed the computer in her pack. "Let's go get Bunnie," she said.

Rotor and Sally slipped into the odd-looking spacecraft. Rotor fired up the engines. The ship glided smoothly through the air. Slipping through a secret exit, the spacecraft cleared the tall trees of the Great Forest on its way to outer space.

Once they were above the forest, Rotor hit the main thrusters. The ship kicked into top speed, and its two passengers were pressed against their seat backs. In a few seconds, the velvety blackness of space replaced the rich blue of the Mobius sky.

"It's incredible up here!" said Sally. She pressed her face against the porthole glass and gazed at the stars beyond.

Rotor plugged Nicole into the ship's navigational computer. "Ready?" he asked.

"Ready," replied Nicole.

"Download, please," Rotor asked politely. It was hard not to think of Nicole as a living member of their group of Freedom Fighters. At Rotor's command, Nicole transferred the location of the prison into the ship's computer. The course was set. The tiny spacecraft headed toward its destination.

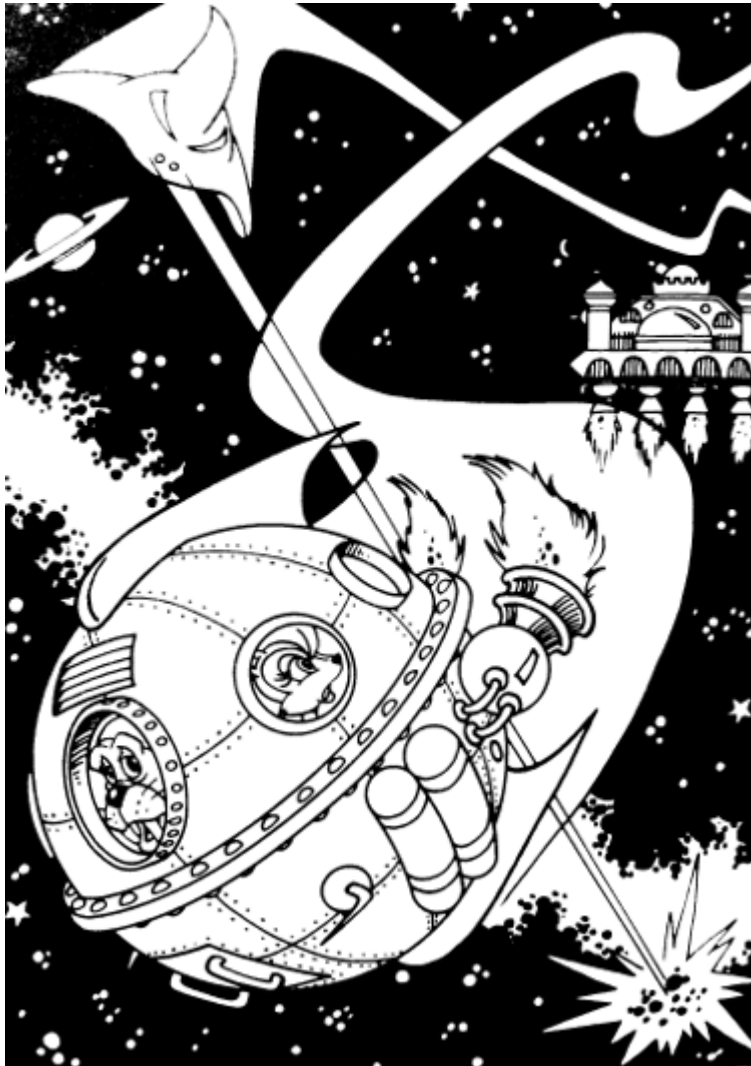
The prison was in a fairly low orbit around Mobius, so it came into view quickly.

"There it is!" exclaimed Sally, peering through the porthole. "But what's that?" Sally spotted a group of objects moving toward their spacecraft.

"I can't tell," replied Rotor. "There wasn't enough time to build sensors into this thing."

A bright burst of laser fire exploded in front of the ship's main porthole.

"I think we've got company, Princess," said Rotor. He switched the ship to manual control and maneuvered out of the way of another laser blast. "They look like one-person fighter jets," said Rotor. "Or in this case, one-Swatbot fighters."



"But we can't outmaneuver them forever!" said Sally.

"That won't be necessary, Princess," said Rotor. He flipped a switch, and the door to the weapons port slid open. Rotor slipped his robot-paralyzing weapon into the opening. Then he locked the trigger into firing position and sent the ship into a spin.

The old diving bell spun around and around like a top. As it spun, it sprayed energy from the robot-paralyzing weapon, which instantly neutralized the space-Swatbots in their attack ships.

"Nicely done, Rotor," said Sally.

"We're almost at the prison, Princess," said Rotor. "I'm going to line us up for docking."

Rotor fired his thrusters. The ship slowed down, then rotated into position. Rotor guided it into a soft hook-up with one of the prison's docking bays. "We're in," he said when he heard the docking seals lock.

"Now the fun begins," said Sally. "Come on."

Rotor grabbed his robot-paralyzing weapon. Then he slid open the ship's hatch and followed Sally into the prison. They made their way along cold steel floors. The ceilings were low, and the rooms were small. The station had obviously not been built for comfort. There was no sign of any facilities for a living crew—no sleeping quarters, no kitchens, no recreation areas.

"The whole prison must be run by Swatbots," observed Rotor.

"It looks like the only living beings here are the prisoners," added Sally bitterly. She pulled Nicole from her backpack and plugged the computer into a terminal that jutted out from a steel wall.

On the small monitor, Nicole produced a map showing the location of the cells. "Prison records indicate that Bunnie Rabbot is here."

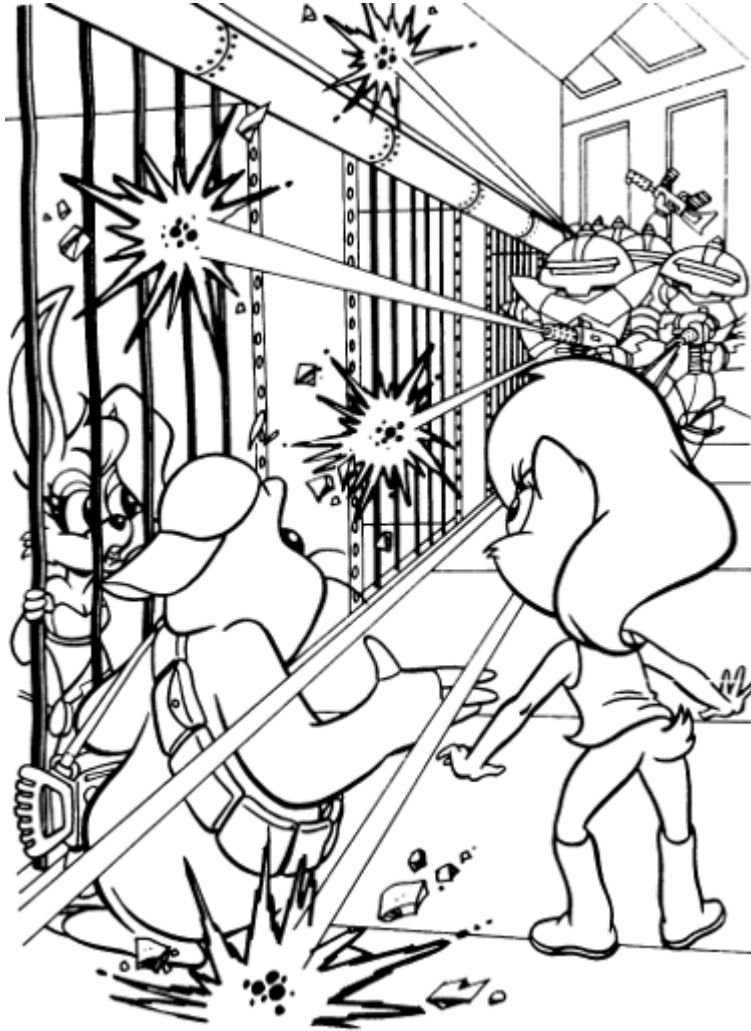
Sally grasped Rotor's arm and smiled. "At least we know she's here," said Sally. "What about other prisoners, Nicole?" she asked.

"I find no evidence of any others, Your Highness," said Nicole. "Aside from you two, Bunnie is the only living being in this prison."

Rotor and Sally reached the cell area in no time. There, sitting dejectedly in the first cell, was Bunnie. "Sally! Rotor!" she exclaimed. "Am I ever glad to see you! How did you—"

"No time for that now," said Sally. "We'll chat on the way home."

Rotor pulled out his electrostatic digital tumbler sequencer and placed it on the cell door's lock. Alarms sounded instantly. Before Rotor had a chance to use his device, Swatbots came pouring into the corridor from each side.



Rotor lifted his robot-paralyzing weapon and fired at the Swatbots charging from one direction. They fell before him. But before he had a chance to fire it at the Swatbots coming at them from the other side, a laser blast blew the weapon from Rotor's hand. It skidded along the floor, where the Swatbot commander picked it up.

"We've got to go, Rotor," said Sally.

"But what about Bunnie, Princess?" asked Rotor.

"We'll have to come back for her," Sally replied. "If we don't escape now, we'll be prisoners too. And no one on Mobius will know where any of us are."

"Don't stand there jawing," said Bunnie from her cell. "Go!"

"We'll be back, Bunnie," said Sally. "I promise."

Sally and Rotor dashed down the hallway toward the docking bay. They dove into their ship as laser blasts struck just above their heads. Shoving the thrusters to full power, Rotor blasted away from the prison. He quickly set a course for Mobius.

"I'm sorry, Princess," said Rotor. "This isn't how we wanted this mission to end."

"We've got bigger problems right now, Rotor," said Sally. "Look!"

Through the rear porthole, they could see a group of space Swatbots close on their tail. A searing blast of laser fire struck the tiny ship. It spun out of control. Sally and Rotor tumbled toward a crash landing on Mobius!

CHAPTER 9

During the time that Sally and Rotor were attempting to rescue Bunnie, the X-Treme sports competition continued back on Mobius. Sonic paced back and forth nervously. As he and Antoine watched, a team of Swatbots busily assembled a basketball court. The slam-dunk competition was next. Sonic couldn't wait to see what trickery Robotnik would cook up to try to break the tie.

"Will you please relax, Sonic?" said Antoine. "All your pacing is making me nervous."

"I know I can win this next event with some high-flying, super-spinning, double reverse backward slams," said Sonic. "But what's the use if Butt-nik's going to cheat?"

Before Antoine had a chance to respond, Robotnik announced that the court was ready. He slipped into his special basketball shoes. Sonic stuck with his trusty red sneakers. They were specially made not to burn up at the intense speeds at which Sonic often traveled.

"Slam-dunk next!" announced Snively.

"Oh, go slam-dunk yourself," replied Antoine under his breath.

Snively shot Antoine a dirty look, then continued. "The Great Robotnik will go first."

"Thank you, Snively," said Robotnik. He tightened the laces on his basketball shoes, then stepped up to the mid-court line. Robotnik took a basketball from the rack of balls located at mid court. Then he sprinted toward the basket.

"This should be good," muttered Sonic, smirking. "The only way he can reach the basket is with a ladder!"

Robotnik shocked everyone. At the foul line, he leaped and soared into the air. He went higher and higher. When he reached the basket, he was a foot above the rim. Then he casually released the ball, which dropped through without even disturbing the net.

Sonic was stunned. "How did he do that?" Sonic whispered to Antoine.

"I don't know," replied Antoine. "But now you've got to top it."

Sonic strode out to mid court. He took a ball and eyed the hoop. The he raced toward the basket. At the top of the foul circle, Sonic jumped high into the air. As he rose toward the rim, he did two complete 360-degree spins. He straightened himself out just as he reached the basket. He shifted the ball from his right hand to his left, then back to his right hand again. Sonic slammed the ball through the hoop with a powerful one-handed dunk. "In your face, Butt-nik!" he shouted as he landed on the court.

"Very nicely done," said Antoine, applauding Sonic's skyward slam. "Although as far as competitive sports go, I prefer bridge."

"Top that, toad-head!" Sonic shouted at Robotnik.

"Easily done, hedgehog," snarled Robotnik.

On his next dunk Robotnik started his jump at mid court. He flew high into the air, soaring right above the backboard. He touched the top of the backboard for a split second. Then he bounded even higher. Coming down headfirst, he slammed a two-handed dunk through the hoop. Then he brought his legs back around and landed on his feet.

Sonic grew more and more frustrated. "There's no way that big slug can jump like that on his own," he said, shaking his head.

Of course, Sonic was right. What he and Antoine didn't know was that Robotnik's basketball shoes were spring-loaded. As he jumped, hidden springs built into the soles pushed Robotnik high into the air. It was just one more of his sneaky methods of cheating.

"Okay," said Sonic, taking another basketball from the rack. "This time I'm going to do a jump even he won't top." Sonic sped around the edge of the court three times at Super Sonic Speed. He was nothing but a blue blur as he launched himself toward the basket. Sonic did three backward somersaults in midair, then came down with his back to the basket. He slammed home a perfect backward, over-the-head, two-handed dunk. But something went wrong. The ball bounced off the rim and flew out to center court. It didn't make it through the basket, so the dunk didn't count.

A dejected Sonic returned to Antoine's side. "How could that have happened?" he asked. "I've slammed that dunk a million times!"

"The million and first time's the charm," quipped Snively. "I declare Dr. Robotnik the winner of the slam-dunk competition!"

Once again, of course, Robotnik had cheated. Sonic's back had been to the hoop, so he couldn't see that just as he was about to slam the ball though, Robotnik activated a lid that quickly slid over the basket's opening. The ball hit the lid and bounced away. Then the lid disappeared just as quickly as it had slid out.

Robotnik now led the contest two events to one. Sonic's hope of freeing Bunnie was fading quickly. The two competitors moved on to the next event—a one-on-one soccer contest.

Sonic, Antoine, Robotnik, and Snively hiked a short distance to a regulation-sized soccer field. A goal was set up at each end. A single soccer ball sat in the center of the field. Each player stood in front of his own goal.

"When I blow this whistle," announced Snively from midfield, "the game will begin. The first player to score ten goals will be the winner." Antoine looked on anxiously. He was trying to figure out just how Robotnik would cheat at this contest.

Snively moved to the sideline. Then he stuck the whistle in his mouth and blew a high, shrill blast. The one-on-one soccer match was underway.

Sonic and Robotnik both raced toward the center of the field. Sonic's speed enabled him to easily reach the ball first. He dribbled toward Robotnik, who huffed and puffed to stay with Sonic. It was no contest. Sonic sped past Robotnik and scored the first goal of the game.

"Goal for Sonic The Hedgehog!" exclaimed Antoine excitedly. *Maybe Sonic does have a chance, after all!* he thought.

The rules of the one-on-one competition called for Robotnik to take out the ball since Sonic had just scored a goal. It was then that Sonic and Antoine saw just how Robotnik planned to cheat in this event.

He kicked the ball from in front of his own goal. It went sailing down the field at an incredible speed. *Wow!* thought Sonic as he raced after the

ball. *No one can kick a soccer ball that hard!*

Sonic was right. Robotnik was wearing special steel-toed shoes. Each kick with those shoes was like hitting the ball with sledgehammer.

Using his Super Sonic Speed, Sonic reached the ball just before it entered his goal. He kicked it away, then started down the field on an attack of his own.

Again, Robotnik was no match for Sonic's quickness. Sonic scored another goal easily. That sequence was repeated over and over. Each time Sonic scored, Robotnik got the ball and blasted it the length of the field toward Sonic's goal. But when Robotnik devised his steel-toed shoes to cheat in this event, he forgot about Sonic's blazing speed. Each time Robotnik sent the ball flying toward Sonic's goal, the hedgehog raced back in time to deflect it before it reached the net.

After each save, Sonic dribbled downfield, outrunning and outplaying Robotnik. Sonic used his feet, his chest, and his head to fire the ball into the goal time after time. He soon had ten goals. Robotnik could do nothing but admit that Sonic had beaten him.



"Sonic The Hedgehog is the winner!" shouted Antoine, making fun of the tone that Snively had used when Robotnik won an event.

Only one more contest remained—surfing. Sonic knew that he had to find a way to beat Robotnik in the last event, no matter how much he cheated. If Sonic didn't win, he would never see Bunnie again!

CHAPTER 10

Sonic had tied the score at two events apiece. That meant that the final event would determine the winner of the entire contest.

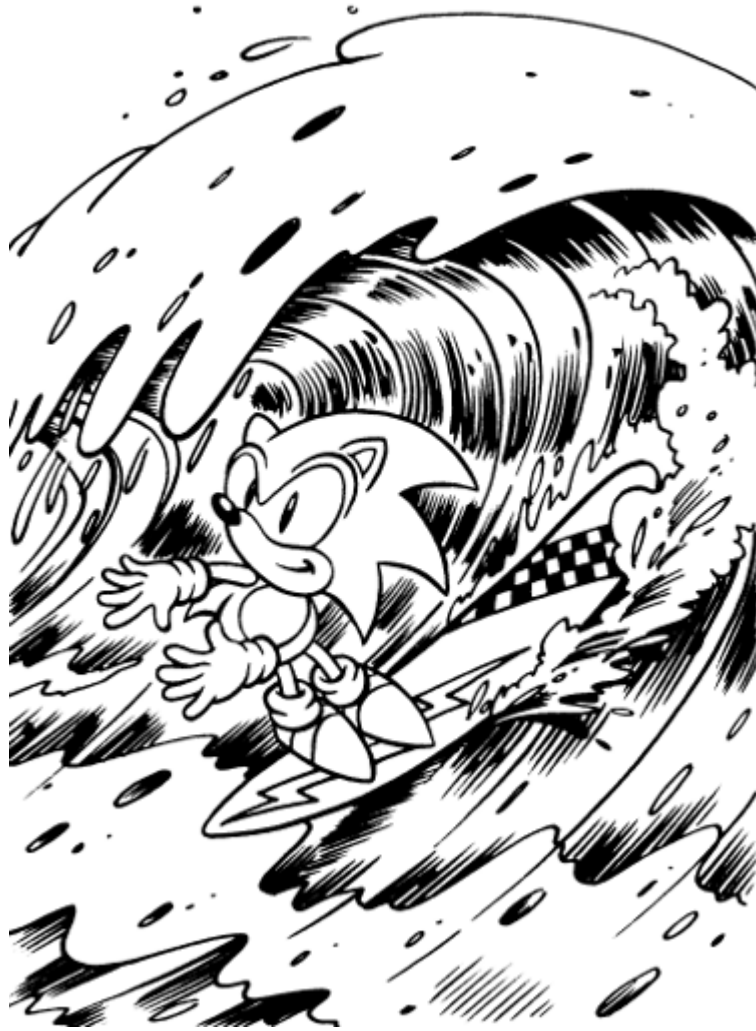
Sonic, Antoine, Robotnik, and Snively all hiked down the cliff where the bungee jumping event had taken place. At the bottom of the cliff, the ocean roared. Huge waves broke then rolled to shore like giant tubes. Hiking a short way down the shoreline, the group came to a rocky beach where the surfing competition would take place.

"The first contestant to successfully ride ten waves will be declared the winner!" announced Snively. "Ready? Begin!"

Sonic and Robotnik each grabbed a surfboard. They dove into the sea. Sonic stretched out flat on his stomach on top of his board. He used his arms to paddle himself out to the deep water. Robotnik sat on his board with his legs dangling from either side. He appeared to be moving toward the deep water with almost no effort.

I can see what's coming here, thought Sonic. He's got some kind of motor hidden on his surfboard. Still, motor or not, I am way more tubular than old Butt-nik. And I'm going to prove it!

Sonic spotted a huge wave in the distance. "This baby's got my name it: Sonic X-Treme!" he shouted. Timing his move perfectly, Sonic leaped up onto his board. He stood up straight and caught the wave. "Cowabunga!" he shouted as he settled his board into the wave. The top of the wave curled over his head. Sonic stayed with it. *This is totally tubular!* he thought. *Let's see Butt-nik top this ride with his motorized cheat-board!*



As the wave raced toward shore, Sonic picked up speed. "Check this out, Butt-nik!" he shouted. Then Sonic did a complete 360-degree spin inside the tube of the wave. His board went up and over his head, then back around again without ever losing contact with the water. "I am stoked, dudes!" he yelled triumphantly. Then he settled in and rode out the wave until it brought him into shore. Sonic immediately turned around and paddled back out to catch another wave.

Robotnik was up and surfing by this time. His motorized board carried him along at a steady pace. But he seemed unsure of his footing and balance. He rode the wave all the way to shore. Robotnik did no fancy moves or surfing tricks.

Sonic caught the next wave. During the ride, he did a handstand on his board and then a back flip, landing on his feet. *I am shredding this*

wave! he thought. *No way Butt-nik can match these moves!*

It proved to be no contest, after all. Sonic ripped each wave up with dazzling acrobatic moves. "Well done, dude," said Antoine when Sonic had finished his tenth successful ride.

"Thanks, Antoine," replied Sonic. "Nothing to it when you're me!"

Robotnik was in the middle of his tenth slow, boring ride. Suddenly, his surfboard slipped out from under him. He plunged into the sea.

"Wipeout!" shouted Sonic.

"Sir! Sir! Are you all right?" cried Snively. He dashed into the ocean to rescue his boss.

Robotnik bobbed up and down in the water like a beach ball. "Help me to shore, Snively!" he yelled between gulps of salt water.

"So," said Sonic when Robotnik returned to shore. "I am Sonic X-Treme, winner of the X-Treme sports contest. Now hand over Bunnie Rabbot."

"I'm afraid you're far too trusting, hedgehog," said Robotnik as he drained the water from his ears. "I never had any intention of handing the rabbit over to you."

Before Sonic could say a word, something appeared in the sky overhead. It was the spacecraft that had carried Sally and Rotor to the orbiting prison. It was now on fire and plunging toward Mobius.

"Ah," said Robotnik. "That would be your companions. It seems they are about to meet their doom!"

The round flaming spaceship crashed into the side of a mountain and exploded. A look of horror mixed with confusion crossed Antoine's face. The Swatbot spacecraft that had been chasing Sally and Rotor landed near Robotnik.

"Don't be so sure about the doom part, Robotnik!" called a voice from above. It was Sally, drifting to the ground under a parachute. Rotor was right beside her, swaying from his parachute.



"Are you all right, Princess?" asked Antoine, feeling much relieved.

"Sal! Rotor!" exclaimed Sonic. "What's going on?"

"He's got Bunnie locked up in a space prison, orbiting above Mobius," Sally explained quickly. "We found her, but Swatbots overwhelmed us. We couldn't get her out of there."

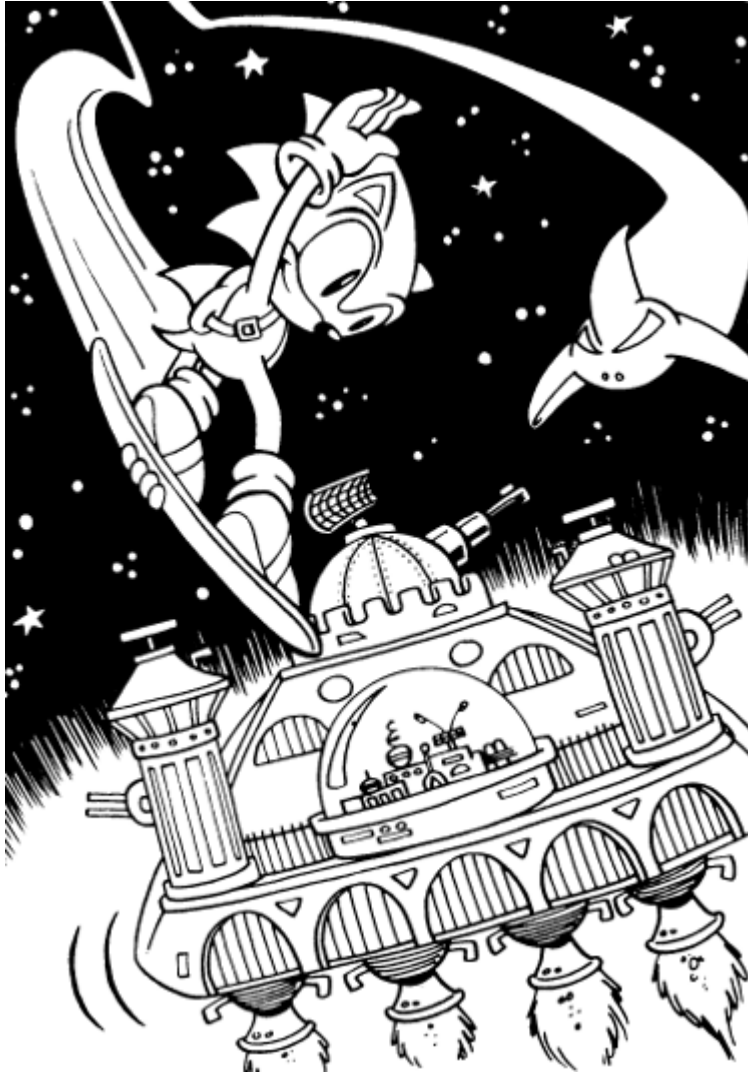
"Don't fret, Princess," said Robotnik. "Soon you'll all be together again—in my prison!" Robotnik pressed a transmitter hidden in his belt. Suddenly, a dozen Swatbots appeared. "Game's over, hedgehog," snarled Robotnik. "And this time, you lose!"

"In your dreams, Butt-nik," replied Sonic. He went into a Super Sonic Spin, smashing several Swatbots.

Suddenly, the Swatbot spaceship fired its engine. "Mission-accomplished," said the Swatbot pilot over a speaker on the outside of the ship. "Enemy-ship-has-been-destroyed. Returning-to-prison." Following its programming, the space Swatbot prepared to blast off. Sonic had an idea.

"I'll be right back," he shouted. "With Bunnie!" Sonic had brought all of his X-Treme sports equipment to the contest, not knowing which sports would be included in the competition. He now grabbed his paraboarding equipment, including his board and parachute. Sonic leaped onto the outside of the spacecraft just as it lifted off.

I think I just invented a new X-Treme sport, thought Sonic as he struggled to hang on to the ship as it zoomed through space. When the ship got close to the prison, Sonic leaped off. He opened his parachute and stepped onto his parboard. "This is even more tubular than riding the waves!" he cried.



Sonic used the momentum he had built up from riding the rocket to glide gently through space. Steering with his parachute, he drifted down to the prison. Once inside, he was met by SWATbot guards. "Pardon me while I juice!" said Sonic. He went into a Super Sonic Spin, cutting a path through the SWATbots. The path led right to Bunnie's cell.

"Sonic, honey!" exclaimed Bunnie. "I am so glad to see you."

"Same here, Bun," said Sonic. "Now let's get you out of there." Sonic grabbed the keys from one of the SWATbots he had smashed and opened the cell. "Come on Bun, let's book!"

"I can't, Sonic," replied Bunnie. "Without my robotic strength I can barely move these heavy mechanical legs!"

"No prob," said Sonic. "Sonic X-Treme Transport is at your service!" Sonic picked Bunnie up and dashed down the hall, with the Swatbots giving chase. They arrived at the office of the Swatbot commander. Bunnie had seen the commander pick up Rotor's robot-paralyzing weapon during the rescue attempt. Sonic burst into the office and put Bunnie down. Sure enough, Rotor's weapon sat on a table behind the commander.

"Intruder-intruder!" said the Swatbot commander, raising and firing a laser rifle. Sonic ducked the blast, then destroyed the Swatbot with a feet-first Super Sonic Spin.

Bunnie grabbed the robot-paralyzing weapon. "Mission accomplished, honey!" she said. Sonic picked up Bunnie again and stepped out into the hallway. The Swatbots were right on top of them. "Here's a little thank-you for my lovely stay here in your hotel!" said Bunnie as she fired the weapon. It was set on the widest beam. Dozens of Swatbots fell. More kept coming, and more fell as they reached the beam. In a few minutes, all the Swatbots were down.

"Nice shooting, Bun," said Sonic. He raced to the docking bay, where a Swatbot spaceship sat unguarded. All the guards had left their posts to help stop Sonic and Bunnie. The two Freedom Fighters slipped into the cramped one-person craft.

"Do you know how to fly one of these things?" asked Bunnie. She squirmed to get Sonic's elbow out of her face.

"How hard can it be?" replied Sonic. He pushed a few buttons on the control panel, and the ship blasted away from the prison. "There, what did I tell you?"

Suddenly, the ship spun out of control. It tumbled end over end, plunging toward Mobius. Sonic started pushing buttons frantically. "All right, I take it back!" shouted Sonic. "It's not so easy!" Through sheer luck, he hit the automatic stabilizers. The ship stopped spinning.

"I'm in control now," said Sonic, breathing a small sigh of relief. "No problem." Sonic grabbed the steering controls and lowered the ship until it was just above the surface of Mobius.

"Look!" shouted Bunnie. "Down there!"

Sonic looked down and spotted Sally, Rotor, and Antoine being led away by a squadron of Swatbots. Robotnik and Snively were nowhere to be seen. "I'll swing the ship around to pass right over them. You open the hatch and fire the robot-paralyzing weapon," said Sonic.

As the ship passed just over the group, Bunnie once again fired the weapon on its widest beam setting. The Swatbots below fell to the ground.

"Nice going, Bun," said Sonic. "Now all I have to do is land this thing!"

"I have a suggestion," said Bunnie. She reached over and pressed a button labeled "Auto-Landing Sequence." The ship glided gently to a soft landing right next to the other Freedom Fighters.

"Bunnie, you're safe!" exclaimed Sally as the two embraced.

"Way to go, dude," said Antoine jokingly.

"Robotnik left as soon as you blasted off, Sonic," explained Sally. "He and Snively are probably safely back in his fortress by now. They left the Swatbots to take us to the fortress."

"But we solved that little problem," said Sonic.

"There's still one problem we need to solve," said Bunnie. "Me! How am I going to get the power back in my mechanical arm and legs?"

"I can help you there," said Rotor. "If I reverse the charge on my robot-paralyzing weapon, it should restore your power." He took the weapon from the Swatbot ship. Then he pulled some tools from his tool belt and got to work. A short while later, he was ready.

Rotor aimed the weapon at Bunnie. "It feels creepy to have you pointing that thing at me, Rotor, honey."

"Don't worry, Bunnie," said Rotor. "It's OK." Rotor fired the weapon. Its bright beam surrounded Bunnie. Then the beam went off. "How do you feel?" he asked her.

Bunnie strode over to the Swatbot spaceship. She pulled her leg back and kicked the ship with all her might. The force of the blow from Bunnie's mechanical leg ripped a huge hole in the side of the ship. "I guess I feel pretty good," said Bunnie. "Thanks, Rotor."

The others looked up in time to see Sonic riding away on his mountain bike.

"Hey!" shouted Bunnie. "Where are you going?"

"There's not enough X-Treme action around here for me," replied Sonic. "I'm off to break my mountain bike slalom record."

"Wait up!" called Rotor. "I'll bring my stopwatch!"



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